My Beloved Ones,

This week began our 40-day fasting period in preparation for “The Winter Pascha”, the Nativity of our Lord. Next Thursday, we will gather to celebrate with our family and friends that beautiful secular holiday called Thanksgiving. How appropriate it is then, that this Sunday’s Gospel tells a parable about the importance of thanksgiving toward God.

In this parable, Christ tells us of a Rich Man, whose land produced a crop so large, he considered rebuilding his barns. The Man believed that he was entitled to rest and pleasure, telling his soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry” (Luke 12:19). God rebukes the man, telling him, “‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’” (Luke 12:20). Christ’s message therefore is clear: “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:21).

In this week’s Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul writes that Christ has forever united us through His Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection, so that “…you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God…” (Ephesians 2:19). During this season of mercy and love, let us imitate the charity of a God who so loved His creation that He took on flesh for our sake, died for our sake, and rose again, so that we can live with Him.

As the Gospel says, our riches and goods will outlive us. What matters most then, is how we will use these God-given gifts to imitate Him. By clothing the naked and feeding the hungry we are use are blessings in such a way as to bless our fellow citizens of the household of God.

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta